

WASHINGTON – Today, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, a senior member of the House Ways & Means and Budget Committees, submitted the following statement to the Congressional Record regarding the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2013 (NDAA):

Today, I voted against the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) for Fiscal Year 2013.

While nothing is more important than keeping America and our men and women in uniform safe, this legislation wastes too much money and represents another missed opportunity for greatly needed reform. The NDAA offered by the Majority is an example of Congress' inability to make hard choices on defense spending. Instead they opted for an "*all of the above*" strategy that put the funding of an already bloated military budget ahead of any semblance of fiscal responsibility – unbelievably, this authorization will consume 57 percent of our *total discretionary budget* and provide \$8 billion *more* than the cap for defense set by the Budget Control Act.

Congress needs to show leadership and prove that we have the ability to make difficult choices. That's why I, along with Representatives Barbara Lee and Barney Frank, introduced an amendment to cut defense spending for Fiscal Year 13 by \$8 billion, aligning this bill with the levels authorized by the Budget Control Act.

It's clear to people across the nation that we can no longer separate national security from fiscal responsibility. Congress needs to get that message. Last week, a Stimson Center poll found that, on average, Americans feel the defense budget should go *down by 18 percent* in 2013. In addition to the public, budget hawks and military experts also agree that we need to cut defense spending. Instead, we'll decrease spending *by less than half of one percent*.

In addition to containing excessive spending on weapons systems that correspond to threats that no longer exist, the bill contains a number of harmful policy provisions. It fails to expedite a rapid and secure withdrawal from Afghanistan; an amendment to the bill that I voted for would have made some progress on [detainee provisions](#), but failed; NDAA prevents the administration from closing Guantanamo once and for all; and, it erodes the New START treaty

aimed at decreasing the size of America's nuclear arsenal.

Without more cuts to the Pentagon, we undermine the very security here at home we aim to protect through military spending. Crumbling bridges and roads, failing schools, and a massive national debt all pose a greater national threat to America's power abroad than modest and reasonable cuts to defense spending.

President Eisenhower once said, "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and not clothed." Those words still ring true today. Even though my amendment did not become part of the final bill, I will not stop fighting to cut wasteful military spending that actually weakens our country.